Box 27 Folder 44

1945

~~Wm~~ Winter 1945

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE COAST OF TAMAULIPAS

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Another factor, as important as vegetation and topography in limiting archeological reconnaissance, is the precipitation. The statistics of the United States Weather Bureau indicate the mean annual precipitation in the state of Tamaulipas is 33 inches. 75% of this rain, however, falls in three months of the year--July, August, and September. During these three months, archeological reconnaissance in this area (which has dirt roads) would be halted. Fortunately, there is regional variation in the amount of rainfall, the south having considerably more than the north. Thus, in the northern part of this area surveying could continue through all but one month of the previously mentioned rainy season. The natural conditions, therefore, do not present a serious hindrance to the survey. Mountains, vegetation, and rainfall are but minor limiting factors.

Is this area important enough to warrant an archeological survey? I believe it is. By archeological work in this area, solutions might be found to the problems presented below.

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The archeological material from the Spiro foci of eastern Oklahoma also shows definite Middle American connections in its "Buzzard Cult" materials. If Dr. James Griffin is correct in believing that the Buzzard Cult of Spiro does not come from the east (Etowah, Moundville, etc.) it is then very possible that some Mexican influences did come directly from the nearest source of that culture type. J. Mason and J. Anderson have shown that northern Tamaulipas was the nearest source of Mexican materials (Huaxtec). Just when these influences appeared in northern Tamaulipas and exactly what they were is not yet established. Certainly, knowledge of northern Tamaulipas might assist in clarifying the problem of the Buzzard Cult and pre-Columbian or post-Columbian Mexican influences in the Southeast.

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The problem of the correlation of the Maya calendar or of the Valley of Mexico archeological materials with Southwestern materials, datable by dendrochronology, is an important aspect in the study of the intermediate area of Tamaulipas. The possibility of a solution of the Maya calendar corrections

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Even if these problems were not solved by archeological reconnaissance and excavation in Tamaulipas (and I believe they would be), certain contributions of value would still be made. Archeological sites in Tamaulipas would be discovered and located. The northward extension of Huaxtec materials, geographically and temporally, could be definitely ascertained. Also, surface collections from a large number of sites might indicate the sites most likely to produce stratigraphic sequences for this area.

The method I would use in making the survey may be briefly stated as follows. Four months would be used in surveying the area; about one month in analyzing the materials; and about two months, in resurveying the area and digging three stratigraphic trenches in three key sites. A car would be used for transportation (or horses when necessary). I would select the following eight towns as bases for the survey: Aldama, Altamira, Soto la Marina, Abasolo, San Fernando, Soldadito, San Francisco, and Matamoros. Working from these bases, I would make surface collections both at sites that I have located, from information already received from J. H. Mason, G. Ekholm, Prieto, and Maya Archaeologie, and at sites that I would locate from information given me by natives or from any other discoveries of my own. Having once covered the area, I would analyze the sherds found and compare them with Ekholm's materials from Tampico. This analysis would be conducted in either Tampico or Matamoros. After the analysis I would again go through the area in order to obtain additional information of sites if possible, and also to excavate three sites. These three excavated sites would be selected on the basis of the following features: a location as far north as possible (certainly north of Soto la Marina), the presence of

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Other equipment	100	75
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Any estimate of expenses for undertaking such a project is difficult to make and often inaccurate. However, on the basis of information received from Dr. Eckholm and his wife, who undertook a similar expedition on the west coast of Mexico, and from knowledge of expedition expenses, gained by directing three field parties, I believe that each item of the budget can best be estimated in terms of the maximum and minimum amount that might be spent. The first item to be considered is transportation. From previous field experience, I think that the best type of car would be a light metal, panelled delivery wagon. I believe that it would be most serviceable for this type of work because it has a high carriage and a large storage space in the back, which can be firmly locked; it uses the same amount of gas and oil as an ordinary car, and would also furnish sleeping space if this necessity arose. A car of this type at the present time can be purchased and put in good condition for $700 to $1290. Running expenses of the expedition have been estimated by Eckholm at around $190 a month. Thus, the running expenses for this project would be between $700 and $800. Labor for excavations would cost between $400 and$750. The initial and final traveling expenses, as well as expenses for typing, editing, and analyzing the material, I have lumped together under one item, at a cost

of $300 to $490 . Equipment composes the last two items. Photographic equipment would cost between $75 and$150, and excavating equipment, medical supplies, paper, etc. would cost about the same.

Fortunately, two sums of money may be subtracted from the amount needed for the expedition. The resale of the automobile would return between $150 and $400. Also, a contribution of $500 t oward this expedition has already been made.

A listing of the estimate follows.

~~The following summary will indicate the budget rather graphically.~~

ITEMS	MAXIMUM EXPENSE	MINIMUM EXPENSE
Automobile	$1200	$700
Running expenses	900	700
Labor	750	400
General expenses (travel, analysis)	400	300
Photographic equipment	150	75
Other equipment	100	75
Total expenditure	3500	2250
Reselling of car	400	150
Amounton hand	500	500
Amount Needed	$2600	$1600

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE COAST OF TAMAULIPAS

The area in which the archaeological reconnaissance is to be undertaken ~~may be generally defined as~~ is the coastal section of Tamaulipas. Specifically, the area ~~might be defined as being~~ is bounded on the south by F. C. Central Mexicano (railroad) between Tampico and Gonzalez, on the west ~~the boundary of the~~ area would be the meridian of latitude 0° 42', west of Mexico City (roughly, ~~the area would be bounded by~~ a line from Gonzalez to Hidalgo, Tamp.), on the north ~~the boundary would be~~ the Rio Grande River, and on the east by the Gulf of Mexico.

The topography of the area indicates that ~~it might easily be surveyed rather rapidly.~~ a rapid survey could easily be made. For the most part, the area is composed of flat coastal plain. However, five small mountain ranges do exist. The Sierra des Jose Los Rosino Rise in the southeastern portion of the area; the Tamaulipas mountains extend into the area from the southwest; the Sierra de Los Maratines ~~exist~~ are present in the central portion of the area, while the Sierra de Pamabrones touch the area on the northwest. Only two rivers of any size run through this area; the Rio del Soto la Marina and the Rio del San Fernando. Both rivers flow from west to east. In the northeastern corner of this state there is a swampy area. None of these topographical features should hamper the surveying appreciably.

The vegetation lends itself well to a rapid survey. As grassy, treeless desert, the country extends from the Rio Grande to the Rio del Soto la Marina. From Soto la Marina

[illegible]

to Tampico the desert vegetation gradually disappears and a semi-tropical vegetation appears. This southern tropical portion will be more difficult to survey, but it is ~~relatively~~ small and the area surrounding it is relatively well-known. ~~Thus~~ an extensive survey of it is not imperative.

ANOTHER as

~~A~~ factor ~~as~~ important as vegetation and topography in limiting archaeological reconnaissance is the annual precipitation. The statistics of the United States weather bureau indicates that the mean annual precipitation ~~for a ten-year period was~~ IS 33 inches. ~~This is a moderate amount for a year,~~ However, 75% of this rain falls in three months of the year, July, August, and September. During these three months archaeological reconnaissance in this area (which has dirt roads) would be halted. Fortunately, there is regional variation in the amount of rainfall, the south having considerably more than the north. Thus in the north of this area surveying ~~might~~ continue through all but one month of the previously-mentioned rainy season.

no ¶

conditions, therefore,

do not present a serious hindrance to the

~~Thus it may be seen that~~ The natural ~~phenomena~~ would ~~favor the possibility of making a~~ survey. Mountains, vegetation, and rainfall ~~would be~~ are but minor limiting factors. ~~However,~~ ¶ Is ~~the~~ This area important enough to warrant an archeological survey? I believe it is. ~~My belief is based on the fact that certain very important archaeological problems have the greatest possibility of being solved by archaeological work in this area.~~ By archaeological work in this area, solutions may be found to the problems presented below.

The most obvious problem that ~~may~~ be solved ~~by making a survey in this area~~ is that of ascertaining the cultural relations between Middle American and the Southeast

(particularily the Middle Mississippi phase). The cultural resemblances between prehistoric Middle Mississippi and the prehistoric Huaxtec (period V) materials have been pointed out by Ekholm and ~~would definitely~~ seem to indicate some sort of cultural connection. That these cultural ~~relations passed~~ features were borne through Tamaulipas is very likely; therefore, precisely what they were and when they occurred ~~could~~ might be ascertained by working there. ~~Also,~~ ~~This~~ Ekholm's hypothesis regarding connection ~~could~~ might thus be definitely substantiated.

~~Likewise,~~ The archaeological material from the Spiro foci of eastern Oklahoma also shows definite Middle American connections in its "Buzzard Cult" materials. If Dr. James Griffin is correct in believing that the Buzzard Cult is post-Conquest and that the Buzzard Cult of Spiro does not come from the east (Etowah, Moundville, etc.), ~~then~~ it ~~may be~~ is very possible that some Mexican influences did come directly from the nearest source of that culture type. J. Mason and J. Anderson have shown that northern Tamaulipas was the nearest source of Mexican materials (Huaxtec). ~~Exactly~~ Just when these influences appeared in northern Tamaulipas and what they were is not yet ~~ascertained.~~ established. Certainly, knowledge of ~~the~~ northern Tamaulipas ~~may~~ might assist in clarifying the problem of the Buzzard Cult and pre-Columbian or post-Columbian Mexican influences in the Southeast.

Besides the possibility of late cultural connections between Mexico and the southeast, the ceramic resemblances between the Tamaulipas complex of Tampico and the Tchefuncte-Marksville of Louisiana indicate the possibility of an earlier Southeast-Middle American cultural relationship.

Tancol

However, the ~~distribution of the Tancol complex materials~~, further knowledge of the Tancol complex materials and their distribution, and information concerning the area between Louisiana and Tampico, Mexico, are certainly necessary if anything definitive is to be said concerning cultural relationships.

The problem of the correlation of the Maya calendar or the Valley of Mexico archaeological materials with southeastern ~~datable~~ materials dgtable (by dendrochronology), is an important aspect in the ~~any~~ study of the ~~any~~ intermediate area of ~~such as~~ Tamaulipas. The possibility of a solution of the Maya calendrical correlations by work in Tamaulipas is exceedingly likely. ~~plausible~~. Most of the pottery phases of the southwest can be dated by dendrochronology. Krieger in central and eastern Texas has found datable Pueblo, ~~and~~ the possibility of finding similar materials along the Rio Grande in Tamaulipas (a shorter distance along a more accessible trade route, ~~the Rio Grande River~~) is very possible ~~likely~~. Since Huaxtecan sherds, also, are found along the Rio Grande (according to J. A. Mason), and since these in turn may be correlated with the ceramic sequences of the Valley of Mexico and the Mayan pottery sequence, it may be possible to find datable Pueblo sherds in association with them. By cross-dating of Pueblo datable ceramics with the Mexican and Mayan materials, one might be able to ascertain which Maya correlation (12.9.0.0.0., 11.16.0.0.0. or 11.3.0.0.0.) with the Christian calendar is most likely to be correct.

However, the problems of prehistoric cultural relationships between Mexico and the United States are not the only ones that may be solved in the coastal region of Tamaulipas. Early Man (pre-pottery cultures) might be found in this region. The

arid, arroyo-cut, sandy plains of Tamaulipas would not have totally obliterated his remains, as have the tropical forests further south in Mexico. Also, non-pottery cultures are found in abundance in Texas, in Coahuila (Basketmaker, reported by Taylor), and farther northwest along the Rio Grande (Big Bend Basketmaker).

The final problems ~~that~~ which might be solved by all archaeological survey ~~undertaking~~ in a peripheral area such as Tamaulipas concern ~~have to do with~~ pre-Archaic ceramic horizons. Conditions for ~~The possibility of~~ finding such horizons are ~~is~~, ~~at the worst, slight~~, ~~but it is more likely to be found~~ more favorable in a peripheral area where sites are smaller and refuse deposits not so extensive than in an area of more intensive occupation, such as one finds south of Tampico.

Even if these problems are not solved by archaeological reconnaissance and excavation in Tamaulipas (and I believe they will be), certain contributions of value will be made ~~that will be of value~~. Archaeological sites in Tamaulipas will be discovered and located. The northward extension of Huaxtec materials, geographically and temporally, can be definitely ascertained. Also, surface collection from a large number of sites may indicate the sites most likely to produce stratigraphic sequences for this area.

The method I shall use in making the survey may be briefly stated as follows: Four months will be taken up in surveying the area, ~~then I shall~~ analyze these materials ~~(about one month)~~, and finally resurvey the area and dig three stratigraphic trenches in three key sites (about two months). ~~Specifically, the survey shall be made in the following manner.~~ A car will be used for transportation, or horses when necessary.

I shall use eight towns as bases for the survey. These towns are Aldama, Esminis, Soto la Marina, Abasolo, S. Fernando, Soldadito, San Francisco Matamores. From these towns I shall make trips, making surface collections at sites that I discover, am told of by the natives, or have already located from information received from J. H. Mason, G. Ekholm, Prieto and Maya Archaeologie. Having once traversed the area I shall analyze the sherds found and compare them with Ekholm's materials from Tampico. I shall make this analysis either in Tampico or Matamoros. Having made the analysis I shall again pass through the area, possibly receiving more information of sites, and also excavating three sites. These three excavated sites shall be selected on the basis of the following: that they have Toncal complex materials, that their ceramics show them to have been occupied for a considerable length of time, that their ceramics show definite affiliations with archaeological manifestations further south, and these sites are situated as far north as possible (certainly north of Bahia la Marina).

As has been mentioned the time for making this survey is in part governed by the weather. Taking the rains into account it seems that there are two alternative times for making the survey: one might start in April, 1945, and survey through July, moving from Tampico northward (ahead of the rains), analyze the materials during August and September (the rainy months), and then finish the survey in October and November; or one might start after the rains from Brownsville in October, 1945, and survey southward through January, 1946, analyze the materials at Tampico in February, and finish the survey and excavate during March and April. Both alternatives are convenient for the author,

but I believe that I favor the latter because I would rather not take the chance of being caught in northern Tamaulipas by rains ~~in July~~. With dirt roads and sparse populations, ~~it might prove to be a rather trying ordeal.~~

The archaeological materials found in the survey ~~shall~~ would, for the most part, be given to the National Museum of Mexico. A copy of the final report, photographs, and field notes, also, ~~will~~ would be ~~given~~ presented to that museum. However, type collections ~~will~~ would be given to other institutions upon request. The raw data such as field notes, photographs, etc., ~~will~~ would be deposited at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago. The final report will be, ~~the~~ in the form of a doctoral dissertation ~~of the author~~ and ~~will~~ would be ~~deposited~~ placed in the library of ~~that institution~~ the University. If the archaeological material warrants publication, arrangement ~~can~~ could be made for the publication of ~~that~~ this thesis.

The personnel ~~for making the survey~~ has not ~~as yet been definitely set up~~ been definitely decided as yet. However, I ~~believe it~~ think it would probably be best, (~~for reasons of transportation~~ due to transportation difficulties,) to limit those taking part in the expedition to three persons. These three persons ~~will~~ would be myself, Richard S. MacNeish, of the University of Chicago, ~~leader of the expedition~~, one other graduate student from the ~~University of Chicago~~ university who has had field experience, and one Mexican, either a student from the University of Mexico or an amateur archaeologist recommended by Dr. Gordon Ekholm, ~~to guide.~~ employed to guide. In the final stages of the survey, when excavation ~~is being done~~ is being done, it ~~will~~ would be necessary to hire ten unskilled laborers, who ~~will~~ would be supervised and trained by the three permanent members of the party.

Any estimate of expenses for undertaking such a project ~~are~~ is difficult to make and often inaccurate. However, ~~on the basis of~~

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